

Top Secret

219

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday 5 June 1978 CG NIDC 78/130C

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ZAIRE: Situation Report

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[redacted] Spurred on by France, a number of French-speaking African countries have agreed to provide troops for a pan-African force to maintain order in the Shaba Region of Zaire after the withdrawal of French and Belgian airborne units. Morocco will furnish the largest contingent--some 1,500 men. The vanguard of this force began leaving Morocco yesterday aboard US transport aircraft. Most of the Moroccan troops were engaged in fighting the Polisario Front guerrillas in the Sahara and have considerable combat experience.

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[redacted] General Loubaris, who led the Moroccan expeditionary force to Shaba last year, will again command the Moroccan contingent.

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[redacted] The other countries involved are readying their troops for a US airlift to Shaba. Senegal, Togo, Gabon, and the Ivory Coast are prepared to send from 100 to 600 men each. Transport schedules indicate that these forces will begin arriving in Shaba in the next two days.

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[redacted] According to the French deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, the French military is prepared to withdraw French forces immediately from Zaire, but they cannot get authorization from President Giscard to do so. The officer said that critical logistic shortages and the fear that the military situation might worsen put the remaining French Legionnaires in a precarious position. He pointed to political opposition in France and Zaire as another reason favoring early withdrawal of French troops and said that the Legionnaires' prolonged stay in Zaire limited France's capability to intervene in other countries such as Chad or Mauritania.

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[redacted] The French Government apparently has not accepted the recommendation of the Joint Staff that the remaining troops be withdrawn soon because it fears that the withdrawal would be interpreted as a sign that France is abandoning Zaire and would lead to a panic exodus from Shaba of the remaining European technicians. The French official believes that some Legionnaires may remain in Zaire for "a few more weeks" but is hopeful that most of them can leave as soon as the African force is in place. The deployment of the African force may also determine the departure date of the Belgian troops.

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[redacted] The Zairian press claims that Zairian Army units captured the Katangan-held town of Mutshatsha Saturday.

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[redacted] There is still no confirmation of Belgian reports of additional disturbances in northeastern Zaire. American missionaries in the region report that all is quiet. In a conversation with Ambassador Cutler on Friday, a high-ranking Zairian Foreign Ministry official denied the existence of a security problem in the northeast. He acknowledged, however, that the Zairian Army had sent troops to the region. The Embassy subsequently learned that President Mobutu also went to Bunia in northeastern Zaire on Saturday.

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[redacted] Elsewhere, a Zairian military officer warned the occupants of an American firm's work camp at Kananga that rebels were in the area and said that the rebels hope to seize the camp. Most of the occupants of the camp were evacuated.

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[redacted] The Zairian Government seems to be increasingly concerned that disorders will increase. There were some disturbances at the university in Kinshasa last week, and the US Embassy reports there were a large number of roadblocks on the road from Kinshasa to Matadi in Bas Zaire. Zairian military sources have reported possible disturbances in Bas Zaire.

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday, 5 June 1978.

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[REDACTED] The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

CONTENTS

25X1

USSR-FRANCE: Soured Relations	Page 2
SAUDI ARABIA - FRANCE: King Khalid	Page 3
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Turmoil	Page 4

25X1

BRIEFS:	Page 7
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West Germany
Bangladesh
Oman

25X1

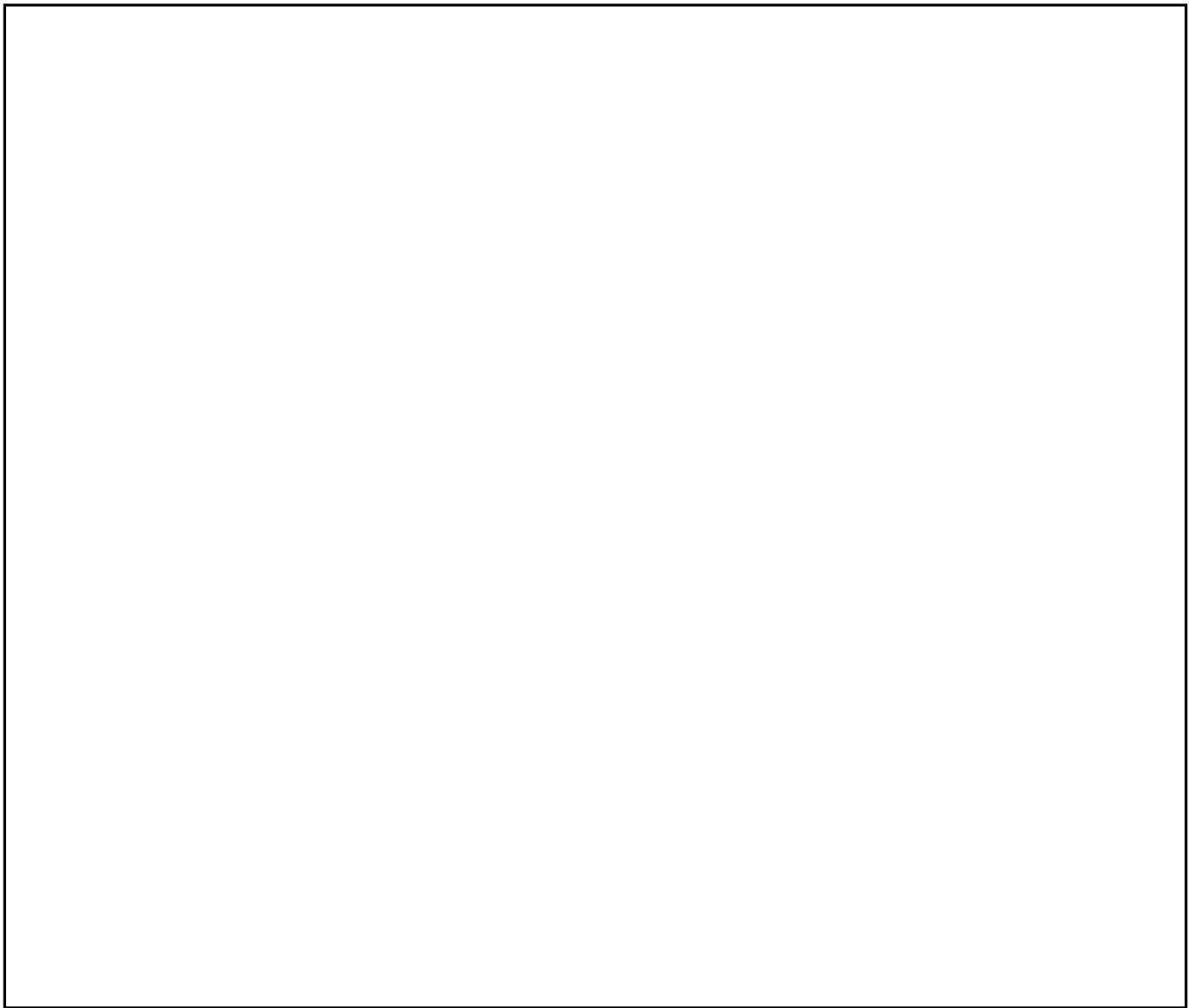
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USSR-FRANCE: Soured Relations

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 Relations between France and the USSR have soured since the French intervention in Zaire, but neither side desires a major breakdown in relations.

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[redacted] The USSR has canceled Soviet Chief of Staff Ogarkov's planned mid-June official visit to France, presumably to show displeasure with the French action in Zaire. The Soviets have also published allegations that French and Belgian forces were solely responsible for the bloodshed in Zaire's Shaba Region, and this provoked an immediate sharp French reply.

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[redacted] In fact, there are several issues capable of disrupting the diplomatic calm the Soviets have tried to preserve in their dealings with West European countries since the early 1970s. The USSR sees the French jump into Shaba not as an isolated ploy but as the latest move in a comprehensive strategy to preserve Western interests throughout Africa. The Soviets also dislike new French approaches in such areas as disarmament and are sensitive about proposed French arms sales to China. Soviet demarches protesting French exploration of the possibility of such sales will receive full attention in Paris, but they are unlikely to halt negotiations, which are already well advanced.

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[redacted] Politically, President Giscard could not afford to cool relations with the USSR in order to move closer to the US, but he is on firmer ground when French and Soviet interests can be portrayed as being in direct conflict. Arms sales to China may be such a case, and there also is now a national consensus on the issue of human rights in the Soviet Union. The French Communists, for instance, have joined the government in condemning the trial of Soviet dissident Yuriy Orlov. French commitments in Africa, on the other hand, are potentially unpopular.

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[redacted] At some point, the French may feel obliged to distance themselves from certain US or NATO projects in order to demonstrate that chillier relations with the Soviets do not signify rapprochement with the US or reintegration into NATO. Disarmament negotiations and NATO consultations are the most likely areas in which the French may show their continuing independence.

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SAUDI ARABIA - FRANCE: King Khalid

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[redacted] //Saudi King Khalid's official visit to France last week marked a modest step forward in the continuing development of closer bilateral relations, according to the US Embassy in Paris. Contrary to press speculation before and

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during the visit, however, no major economic or military agreements appear to have been concluded. The Saudis expressed considerable concern about developments in Africa, particularly in Eritrea.

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Africa figured prominently in talks between Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud and French officials. Saud told the French that the situation in Eritrea was "crucial" for Saudi Arabia. The Saudis believe that any negotiated solution there must be based on a 1962 United Nations resolution on the right of self-determination for the Eritreans. Saud said it was unacceptable that Cuba, acting as a Soviet agent, should be allowed to mediate the dispute. He also expressed concern that Somali President Siad could again face internal political trouble.

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Prince Saud said the Soviets seem to have the capacity to destabilize African regimes at will and rhetorically asked, "Is there a European or American policy toward Africa?" He repeated the standard Saudi position that Europe, and especially the US, must wake up to the Soviet danger in Africa.

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The Saudis showed particular interest in holding regular consultations with the French to obtain the French view of developments in Europe and of Communist activities around the world.

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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Turmoil

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//Shaykh Rashid of Dubai, the United Arab Emirates' Vice President and leading spokesman for states rights, is embroiled in a dispute with UAE President Shaykh Zayid of Abu Dhabi and has threatened to withdraw from the federation. The conflict, which is based on personal and family rivalries as

well as fundamental disagreement over the direction the seven-member union of Persian Gulf shaykhdoms should take, began when the UAE was established in December 1971, but appears to be more strident now than in previous episodes.//

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[redacted] //The current dispute arose in February when Shaykh Zayid ordered the unification of the union's several armed forces, abolished the regional command structure that in effect permitted the several emirates to have their own military organizations, and appointed his second son as commander-in-chief. Zayid's unilateral moves came after the UAE's Supreme Council of Rulers refused to act on his armed forces reorganization plan--even in the face of his threat to cut off financial support to the military establishment.//

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[redacted] //On 9 May, Rashid told the British Ambassador that he would withdraw Dubai from the UAE unless Shaykh Zayid "undertook" to observe the union's provisional constitution and to give the Dubaian leader a bigger role in decisionmaking.//

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[redacted] //The British suspect that Rashid's threat is calculated to induce the UK, Saudi Arabia, and Iran to put pressure on Shaykh Zayid to be more conciliatory. The UK, in fact, has counseled unity to both Zayid and Rashid. Neither the Saudis nor the Iranians are particularly fond of Zayid, but they believe that the collapse of the UAE would damage regional security and open the way to leftist-backed subversion.//

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[redacted] //Rashid's goal is to reverse the tide toward a stronger central government and to apply a strict interpretation to the UAE's provisional constitution.//

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[redacted] //Economic issues also are involved in the dispute. The poorer shaykhdoms complain that Abu Dhabi's commitment to "business nationalism" is intended to throttle their economic growth and to make them perpetually dependent on Zayid's oil money.//

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[redacted] //Although [redacted] in the ruling circles of both Abu Dhabi and Dubai who would like to see the union dissolved, a way almost certainly will be found once more to paper over the differences between Zayid and Rashid.//

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[redacted] Despite alarming reports coming out of the nearby Gulf state of Qatar that the UAE is "finished" and that Rashid

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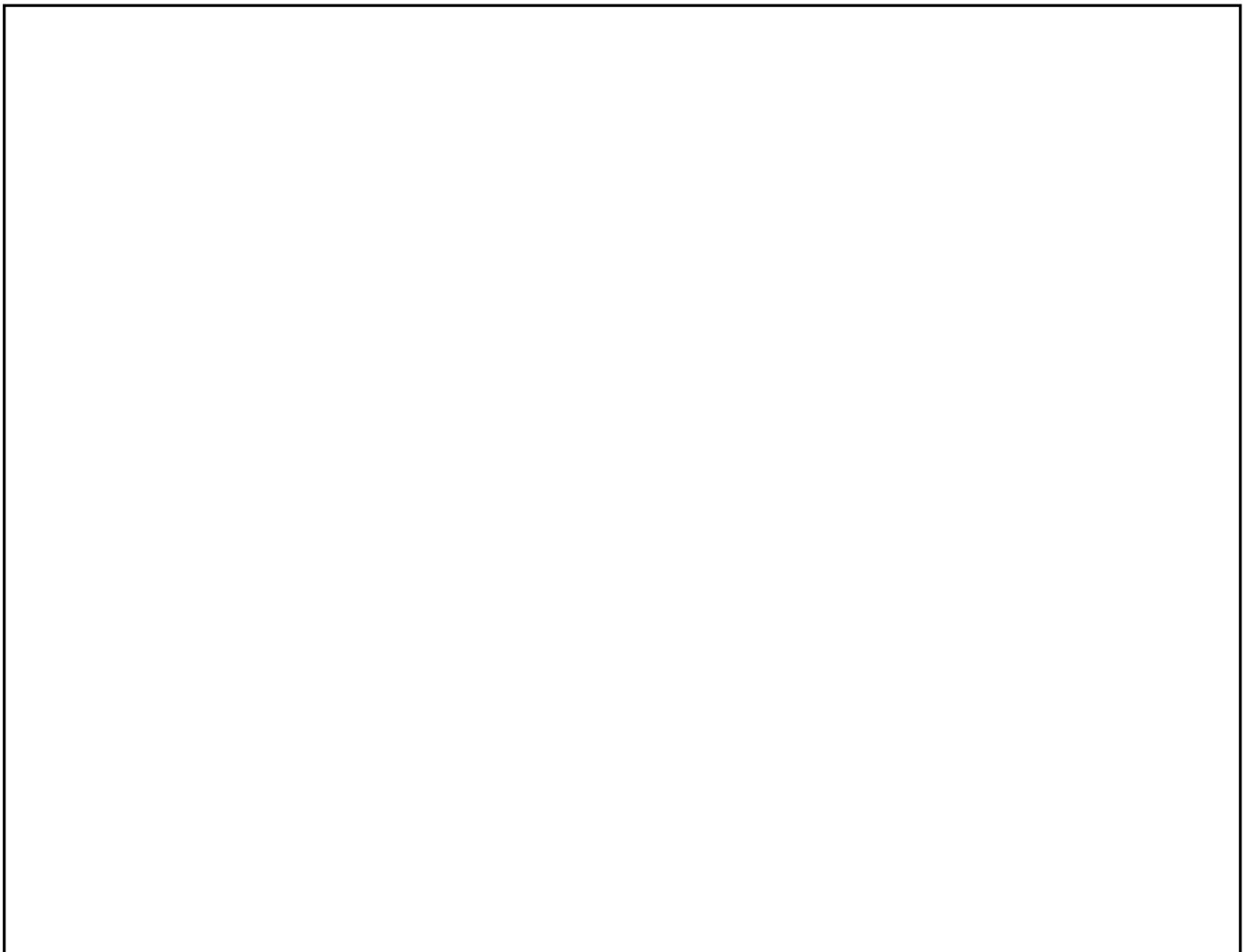
will pull Dubai out of the union in the next week or so, the US Ambassador in Abu Dhabi does not believe that dissolution is imminent.

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[redacted] //As long as Abu Dhabi's oil wealth pays the union's bills and until enough time has passed for a sense of nationhood to develop, it will be virtually impossible to achieve a consensus on the nature of the union or the relationship between the shaykhdoms and the central government.// [redacted]

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BRIEFS

West Germany

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[redacted] The Free Democratic Party failed to win any seats in the West German state elections held yesterday in Hamburg and Lower Saxony. The party did not receive the minimum 5 percent of the vote needed to retain representation in the state assemblies.

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[redacted] Party chairman and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher blamed the defeats in part on environmentalists who ran independent candidates. The Free Democrats had taken part in coalition governments with the Social Democrats in Hamburg and with the Christian Democrats in Lower Saxony. [redacted]

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Bangladesh

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[redacted] The election Saturday of General Ziaur Rahman as President of Bangladesh assures a continuation of Zia's moderately pro-Western foreign policy and emphasis on political stability and economic development. Bangladesh will probably remain heavily dependent upon the US for food aid.

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[redacted] Zia's will first try to mend fences with neighboring Burma. Relations between the two countries have been tense since Burma launched a campaign to oust illegal immigrants and caused more than 100,000 Muslims of Bangladeshi origin to flee. A team of negotiators from Dacca is scheduled to arrive in Rangoon later this week to begin talks on the possible repatriation of the exiles.

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[redacted] Zia's overwhelming victory--he received about 75 percent of the vote--over the candidate of the former ruling party, the Awami League, may aid his efforts to create a political front to oppose the League in the parliamentary election scheduled for November. Although the defeated opposition candidate has charged voting irregularities, the election was free of violence, and the Awami League is not likely to be able to muster a sufficient following to challenge the new government. [redacted]

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Oman

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[redacted] The killing of five British technicians in Oman last week could mark the beginning of a new strategy of terrorism aimed at civilians by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman--a Marxist group dedicated to overthrowing the conservative regimes of Oman and the Persian Gulf shaykhdoms.

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[redacted] Since December 1975 when Oman, with the help of British advisers and several thousand Iranian troops, finally was able to declare a guerrilla war with the Popular Front over, the rebels have carried out only sporadic actions--mostly against military targets. The rebels have been aided by South Yemen in the past, and both the Saudis and North Yemenis have been predicting renewed South Yemeni - sponsored trouble in the area.

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